

## Accusations against the US are foolish, conspiratorial theories that are not based on facts, says Kelly Degan

By Liza Mchedlidze

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan has responded to the open letter from the former Georgian Dream members who recently left the party. In the letter, they accused the United States of having a 'rude and disrespectful' attitude towards the sovereignty of Georgia and its Institutions.

Kelly Degan commented and said that these accusations against the USA are foolish, conspiratorial theories that are not based on facts, as United States' work in Georgia is to help the development of various institutions to ensure that Georgia becomes more stable and democratic and by blaming the United States for the polarization, they are attempting to put their own blame on the Western partners:

"As for the mentioned group of politicians, I don't know what they represent. It is clear that the US has been helping Georgia build its democratic institutions for many years. I don't know what this group represents, who they represent, I don't know how different they are from the ruling party they say they left. I can say that the recent accusations against the US are mindless, conspiracy theories that are not based on facts. It is very important to remember that the United States works with all political parties, with representatives of all political spectrums. We help in the development of Georgia's democratic institutions and economy, ensuring that it is a safer and more stable democratic country.

This is it, What we have been doing together with our Georgian partners for more than 30 years and we will continue to do it in the years to come. I will say that



any accusation against us, as if we are responsible for the polarization here, is an attempt by those who know that they are responsible, to blame it on the Western partners, who have been doing nothing but trying to help Georgia on its European path for more than 30 years. That's all we do," said the ambassador.

US Ambassador pointed out that US has been helping Georgia to reduce the 'deep' polarization that exists in the country and suggested people to look into past, particularly "Gavrilov's Night", the night when the

Tbilisi protests launched after Sergei Gavrilov, a Communist Party member of the Russian Duma who was visiting through the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, sat in a chair reserved by the protocol for the Head of Parliament of Georgia. She told the media that above mentioned Gavrilov's Night, unfulfilled promises, anti-democratic actions, etc. make Georgia deeply polarized. Degan added that it is important for Georgia to work on the recommendations:

"Perhaps everyone remembers well what the situation was

even three years ago, even before that, polarization existed even then and it was caused by many factors. I suggest the Georgian people look at the past and see where this polarization came from. Gavrilov's night, unfulfilled promises, anti-democratic actions, etc. ...I think that's where this polarization came from, not from the Western partners. I think it's very important now to work on the recommendations that have been made, and these recommendations are exactly what the political leaders promised the population that they would do, and this activity

should be done inclusively", says the ambassador.

She also emphasized that the Parliament should work on important issues for the population of Georgia.

"Parliament and other institutions should focus on what is really important for Georgians: jobs, high prices, good education, public health care. Especially now, when the European Commission presented 12 recommendations. It's time to work together inclusively, it's time to put aside opposition and accept the status of a candidate," the ambassador said.

## US Embassy issues a recommendation letter addressed to Parliament of Georgia regarding the judicial reform

By Liza Mchedlidze

The US embassy addressed the recommendations to the Parliament of Georgia regarding judicial reform. According to them, the staffing of the Supreme Council of Justice is a subject of intense debate, especially when "the Parliament has not been able to fill the vacant



U.S. Embassy in Georgia

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**Malkhaz Machalikashvili calls on Soso Gogashvili to publish full information on why his son was killed**



Malkhaz Machalikashvili, the father of Temirlan Machalikashvili, who was killed as a result of Pankisi's special operation, says that after his son

was killed, people connected with Gomelauri, Gogashvili, and SUS often visited him.

"I knew every minute they sent me, who had come in what form, to whom I had to give an answer to bring them there, to Gomelauri and Gogashvili. They are a group of scoundrels picked from the street, some of

thousand scoundrels were sent from the groups of Georgians, as an agent, I was encoding everyone at that moment, so I made targeted statements to everyone so that all this would reach Gomelauri and Gogashvili," said Machalikashvili.

Machalikashvili calls on the former deputy head of the State Security Service of Georgia, Soso Gogashvili, to "instead of disclosing small-scale information, if he wants to go against the government, he should publish a record of why Temirlan Machalikashvili was killed and who is the main culprit".

**It is not clear why the question arises regarding the consultations to improve judiciary reform, Kelly Degnan says**

According to Kelly Degnan, the US ambassador to Georgia, it is not clear why the question arises regarding the ongoing consultations regarding judicial reform. She told the media that the USA has been cooperating with



Georgia on the reform of the judicial system for decades, and significant progress has been achieved in this regard.

"We have been cooperating with Georgia on the reform of the judicial system for decades, and significant progress has been made in this regard, especially in the last decade. We have seen a good attempt at judicial reform. Everyone knows that more work needs to be done, and this is an issue that has never been a topic of debate. Therefore it is not at all difficult to understand why there is now such opposi-

tion to the work that everyone has been talking about for a long time that needs to be continued in order to improve the Georgian judiciary and ensure that it is truly independent, impartial. It is not clear why the question arises regarding the consultations that have been going on regarding judicial reform not only with the US but also with various legal experts, both local and international, for decades. This consultation process led to the improvement of the Georgian judicial system," said the US Ambassador to Georgia.

**US Embassy issues a recommendation letter addressed to Parliament of Georgia regarding the judicial reform**

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positions of non-judge members":

"In order to strengthen the voice of non-judge members in the Council and to create an opportunity for their real participation in the decision-making process, we recommend revising the ratio between the judge and non-judge members in the Supreme Council of Justice."

In the recommendation letter, the US Embassy writes that the Parliament should ensure a transparent selection of members of the Supreme Council of Justice, where representatives of opposition parties, the legal profession, and civil society will have the opportunity to partici-

pate in the interview process with the candidate:

"Parliament, while filling this important vacancy, should consider appointing only highly qualified, apolitical candidates and non-judge members of the Supreme Council of Justice with broad cross-party support by law, and should also take into account the process of appointing a member of the Supreme Council of Justice by the President and bring it into line with the recommended parliamentary process for appointing members.

As for the composition of the Supreme Council of Justice, taking into account the full control of the judicial members over the process of voting and decision-making by the Council, the composition of the Supreme Council of Justice is a subject of intense discussion.

Also, we recommend the gradual appointment of the members of the Supreme Council of Justice, so as not to renew the

full composition of the Council at the same time. Also, the term of office of a member of the Council should be terminated only after his/her replacement is elected/appointed in accordance with the law. The best solution would be to establish a system where, each time, the Supreme Council of Justice is renewed with only one-third of its members.

The term of office of the members of the Supreme Council of Justice: the provision provided by the organic law on common courts should be returned to the existing version until December 2021 and take into account the prohibition of the possibility of electing the members of the Council twice in a row. This change will increase the independence of the Supreme Council of Justice", the document reads.

The US Embassy notes that the existing procedure for electing judges of the Supreme Council of Justice should be changed

by legislation.

"According to the legislation, the existing procedure for electing the judges of the Supreme Council of Justice should be changed. All candidates are required to register and submit their vision in advance so that the judges' conference participants have the opportunity to evaluate the candidate's suitability for the position before voting. Each candidate must have the opportunity to address the conference of judges. Also, each judge participating in the conference must vote for only one candidate, regardless of the number of vacancies to be filled. The vacancy of a member of the Supreme Council of Justice shall be filled by the candidates who will receive the highest number of votes. The existing requirement of the law, according to which the support of at least 2/3 of the members present at the conference is necessary for the election of a member of the Supreme Council of

Justice by the Conference of Judges, should be canceled. After all vacancies have been filled, a reserve list shall be drawn up from the remaining candidates in descending order of votes. In the event of a vacancy occurring as a judge member of the High Council of Justice, the vacancy shall be filled by the next candidate on this reserve list for the remainder of the four-year term of office of the member on the High Council of Justice. In order to avoid the concentration of power in the hands of a small group of judges and to reduce the influence of a few judges in administrative and leadership positions on the judicial system, the law should be amended and the chairman of the court, the deputy chairman, the chairman of the collegium and the chamber should be limited in the possibility of being elected to the Supreme Council of Justice," the recommendation document reads.

Weather

Thursday, August 18

Day ☀️ Clear High: 36°C

Night 🌙 Clear Low: 22°C

Friday, August 19

Day ☀️ Clear High: 34°C

Night 🌧️ Partly Cloudy Low: 22°C

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